

The New House

There is no one in the new house but me on this low gray day. Still I do not feel comfortably alone.

The landlady said that before us the place had been taken by only single men and once by a thin, unhappy girl. Then

that is what I feel. The old loneliness still roams the house looking -- as they did -- for something to do, someplace

to go, someone to love. It is powerful stuff, it invades me and I think their thoughts of food, sex,

suicide. I am drawn downstairs and although I do not like sweets I eat cookies covered with honey and butter. I leave off gorging

only because lust overcomes my hunger. Locked in the bathroom, scores of naked women gyrate before my half-closed eyes. Afterwards

I choose a kitchen knife with mad deliberation and slit my wrist. The pain is exorcism enough and, frightened, I stop the blood,

bind my wound. I tell my wife nothing, but that night while she sleeps I rise and explore -- peering into closets,

creeping into dim rooms. Finally I return to bed and am awakened only by the morning. The next day I sit, poised,

waiting, but everything seems normal: the fire burns, walls sigh, the cat smooths her bristled fur: Good enough. Peace, house -- we bring you love.

Youngish-Old Man in the City

Married and divorced, harried and of-coursed into a sit-down job he doesn't like, he buys a bike for exercise and